THE

ENGLISHMAN's

POLITICAL

CATECHISM.

EXETER:

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M,DCC,XCII.

THE

Engliſhman's Political Catechiſm.

Q. WHAT is *Liberty?*

A. *Liberty* conſiſts in the power of thinking what I pleaſe, and publiſhing thoſe thoughts, provided I neither do, nor deſign, an injury. It conſiſts in following what trade or occupation I chooſe. In ſerving God in any manner that my conſcience dictates. In having ſecure poſſeſſion of my own houſe, which is my caſtle. In ſpending my fortune according to my own inclination, and leaving it to whomſoever I will.

Q. Do you poſſeſs this *Liberty?*

A. I do.

Q. What is *Equality?*

A. *Equality* conſiſts in the being governed by laws which render to every one *Equal Juſtice.* By which, no one can moleſt my perſon or my property; which give me unlimited freedom of action, if I commit no crime; which, if I am injured, afford me a remedy; and cauſe him who injured me, tho ten times as rich, to feel that He is *on a level* with myſelf.

Q. Do you poſſeſs this *Equality?*

A. I do.

Q. What are the *Rights of Man?*

A. They are comprehended in his claim to the preceding benefits. He has a *right* to think and ſpeak what He pleaſes, provided He thereby commits no injury. He has a *right* to follow what trade or occupation He chooſes. He has a *right* to ſerve God according to his conſcience. He has a *right* to the ſecure poſſeſſion of his own houſe, it

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is his caſtle. He has a *right* to ſpend his money as He chooſes, and leave it to whom He will. He has a *right* to be governed by juſt and impartial laws, by which his perſon and his property are ſafe from the attack of violence or oppreſſion; and which give Him unlimited freedom of action, if He commits no crime. He has a *right*, if injured, to have a remedy; and to let the *proudeſt* and *richeſt* experience, if they dare offer him any violence, that they are his *Equals*, and entirely *on a level* with Himſelf. Theſe are the *rights of Man*, of Human nature, the glorious *Birth-rights of an Engliſhman.*

Q. Do you poſſeſs theſe *rights of Man?*

A. I do.

Q. How became you poſſeſſed of them?

A. By the ſtruggles of my anceſtors in the cauſe of freedom; and by a *Revolution* without *cruelty*, or *blood-ſhed*, which placed William the Third on the throne; and drove ſlavery, and arbitrary power into perpetual baniſhment.

Q. Are you threatened with the loſs of theſe benefits?

A. No one will preſume to threaten Us. We can only loſe them by our own weakneſs or folly.

Q. Do you perceive the advantages of them?

A. I do.

Q. In what?

A. In the general proſperity of the Nation—in its' extenſive commerce—in its' riches—its' agriculture—its' manufactures—its' arts and ſciences—its' humanity—and liberality. In its' being the moſt flouriſhing empire at this time exiſting on the face of the Globe: and in its' being the envy of the whole world. Theſe are the advantages poſſeſſed by England; becauſe we poſſeſs, and have poſſeſſed for an hundred years paſt *real Liberty*, *true Equality*, and *the genuine Rights of Man.*

Q. If then you ſee and know the advantages of theſe bleſſings, will you not endeavour to preſerve and defend them?

A. I will, at the hazard of my life.

Q. Are there any who wiſh Us deprived of theſe precious, theſe peculiar advantages which we enjoy under the Britiſh Conſtitution?

A. I fear there are.

Q. Who are they?

A. Deſperate and Needy Adventurers, Traitors, and Mortal Enemies to this Country.

Q. How do they proceed?

A. By endeavouring to impoſe on our underſtandings; hoping to make us believe that we do not poſſeſs, what we have poſſeſſed for ſo long a time. To blindfold, and lead Us in the dark. To deceive Us with gilded viſions and fantaſtic chimæras. And cauſe us to fall from a precipice, while quitting a ſubſtance, and graſping at a ſhadow.

Q. What is their object?

A. Confuſion, tumult, riot, and *Civil War*.

Q. To obtain what end?

A. That while all things are in Diſorder, they may divide our ſubſtance.

Q. Do they produce any example for us to follow?

A. They do. The example of *France*.

Q. What is the preſent ſtate of *France?*

A. No government—no laws—no ſecurity for perſons or property—no religion—no agriculture—no commerce. The lands of the Gentleman, the eſtate of the Farmer, the ſtock of the Tradeſman, at the mercy of the *Mob*. Sacrilege—murder—nay the murder of Women and Children—and to complete this wretchedneſs, theſe horrors—impending national bankruptcy, and *Famine* already begun.

Q. What do they call *this ſtate of France?*

A. They call it, *Liberty*, *Equality*, and *the Rights of Man*.

Q. And they would willingly bring about this ſtate in *England?*

A. They would.

Q. By what means?

A. By the ſame means that it has been effected in France. *By ſtirring up the Mob againſt the Gentleman, the Farmer, and the reputable Tradeſman.* By ſaying to them, "Let Us *command*, and You ſhall *plunder*." You ſhall *kill*, or *drive out of the kingdom* all moderate men, all who love their King and Country, and we will *take poſſeſſion* of their *Lands*, their *Tenements*, and their *Goods*.

Q. Can this be true?

A. It

A. It is as true, as that we are now living in the midſt of proſperity, ſecurity, and abundance.

Q. How then have the French armies advanced into Savoy, Flanders, and a part of Germany?

A. Becauſe All *Men of property*, to avoid being *robbed*, fly at their approach, and carry off every valuable they can with them. The *armed Mob of France* then calls together *the Mob of the Country*, and tells them it is now *their* turn to govern. A *Mock-government* takes place, *under direction of the French army*, who eat up the proviſions of the inhabitants, lay arbitrary fines on them, make uſe of their goods, and revel in luxury for a time, while their own Countrymen at home are literally *ſtarving*.

Q. And ſuch a government the deſperate and needy Aduenturers mentioned before, Traitors and mortal Enemies to this country, want to introduce here?

A. Yes; and would attempt it if they dared; or if they could get their friends the French to aſſiſt them. But, thank God! the *Navy of England* is not annihilated. It is time to reduce *this Mob* to order, which has deſtroyed it's own Country, and is now diſturbing the peace of the world. Whoſe *Miſſionaries*, *Abettors*, and *Correſpondents*, have been impotently trying to cheat Us out of our ſenſes; and, if poſſible, excite commotions, which might embroil Us at home, and hinder Us from *puniſhing* their *dark machinations*, and *ſecret*, *inſidious hoſtilities*. The men of *Property* in this Nation, have more good ſenſe than to ſuffer themſelves to be deprived of it, under any ridiculous and abſurd pretences: nor will they permit any power on earth to wreſt it from them. And being governed by juſt laws, under a King, who, though he *may* do all good, *can* do no man an injury, or perform a ſingle action but as *the law* directs, will not baſely and tamely reſign themſelves to the *arbitrary power* of the *Idle*, the *Ignorant*, and the *Profligate*; though *dubbed* by the French, who have deſtroyed all other titles, and by the incendiary, and ſeditious adherents of the French in this country, with the vain and inſignificant terms, *as uſed by them*, of *Liberty*, *Equality*, and the *Rights of Man*.

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They are terms which can only be comprehended by Britons, who experience their effects, and bear them engraven on their hearts. With *Mobs* and with *Frenchmen*, they have quite a different meaning, and interpreted in *their* language, Liberty is *Licentiouſneſs*; Equality, *Plunder*; and the Rights of Man, *a Right to commit every Crime of which Human Nature is capable.*

Q. You have two or three times mentioned *the Mob*; to whom do you confine that appellation?

A. I will firſt tell you who *are not the Mob*; and then, who *the Mob are.*——The honeſt and induſtrious Labourer and Mechanic *is not* One of the Mob. The faithful Workman, or Journeyman, who regards the intereſt of his Employer *is not* one of the Mob. The Servant who is true to his truſt, *is not* one of the Mob. *None*, however poor, who perform their duties in their allotted ſtations, belong to the Mob. *None* who demean themſelves peaceably, and obey the laws, conſtitute a part of the Mob.—But, the idle, drunken Mechanic, or Labourer, *is* one of the Mob. The Workman or Journeyman who neglects the intereſt of his Employer, *is* one of the Mob. The Servant whoſe fidelity cannot be relied on *is* one of the Mob. All who do not perform their duties in their allotted ſtations *belong to* the Mob. All who are noiſy, clamorous, inſolent, and diſobedient to the laws, *conſtitute a part* of the Mob. Sturdy Beggars, Cheats, and Thieves, *are* all Mob. In ſhort, the Mob conſiſts of ſuch men as deſtroyed *Newgate* in 1780, and *Citizen Prieſtley's houſe* in 1791.

Q. Do you mean to comprehend under this term the *lower Orders only?*

A. No—for the *very loweſt* may from their good behaviour, induſtry, and honeſty, be reſpectable in their ſituation. While he who is born in a *higher rank*, may, by low manners, rioting, drunkenneſs, diſhoneſty, and a defiance of the laws, degrade himſelf to the level of the Mob, and be only qualified for one of their Patrons and Ringleaders.

Q. What is meant by the word *Reform?*

A. It is a *ſuſpicious* word.

Q. Why?

Q. Why?

A. Becauſe I hear it made uſe of by the ſame people, who want to deceive Me with the terms, Liberty, Equality, and the rights of Man.

Q. What is their intention?

A. They have ſhewn it by their ſeditious ſpeeches and writings. Their endeavours are to make us diſſatisfied with our condition, and weary of being happy. To keep up a ſpirit of diſcontent in the nation; and if they cannot puſh diſturbances as far as they would, to puſh them as far as they can.

Q. Do you think then our preſent form of government is perfect?

A. Nothing Human is perfect; but I believe it is more perfect than any other form of government in the world.

Q. Why?

A. Becauſe the people governed are more flouriſhing, rich, and happy, than thoſe of any other nation in the world. This is a truth which cannot be denied. And the reaſon why other nations are not ſo flouriſhing, rich, and happy as ourſelves, is, becauſe their form of government is not ſo good as our's.

Q. But do you not think the manner of repreſentation of the People in Parliament ought to be altered?

A. No.

Q. Why?

A. Becauſe I conſider it to be the foundation, the ſtep, on which thoſe enemies of the community want to mount, who, inſtead of the preſent form of government, wiſh to have Us under the dominion of the mob.

Q. How ſo?

A. Becauſe, if the mode of election be altered, and the ſcale of it extended, *men of property*, intereſted *by that property* in the real welfare and ſtability of the nation, would not be choſen; but *cunning, low-minded men, who had nothing to loſe*. Actuated by the luſt of *power* and *gain* under the maſk of *Equality*, they would give the watchword to their Friends without doors—declare the King and Lords uſeleſs (as the caſe was in the days of Cromwell) and fabricate, what *they would call a Republic*; but in other words,

words, a *violent uſurpation of all the lands and property of the Kingdom*, which would be at the diſpoſal of them and their adherents.

Q. What makes you entertain this opinion?

A. The ſame cauſes always produce the ſame effects. We can only judge of events to come by thoſe which have preceded. I have ſeen what has happened in France, whence either *men of property* are baniſhed, or where they are groaning under the tyranny and oppreſſion of an armed mob—while *Tinkers* and *Taylors* are converted into *Judges* —a *Shoe-maker* is *Attorney General*—and *Fiſh-women*, *Murderers*, *Ruffians*, and *Banditti*, are become *Legiſlators* and *Generals*.

Q. It is better then, you think, to remain as we are?

A. Much better—for all thoſe *who have any thing to loſe*. The *Deſperate* and *Needy* may find *their* advantage in a change. To *them*, like the members of *the French Conſtitution*, *ſixteen ſhillings*, or *a guinea* a day would be an object for which they would uſe all their endeavours to overthrow the Conſtitution. Eſpecially, as they would beſides, have their chance of plunder, and a diviſion among themſelves, of the eſtates and goods of the Gentleman, the Farmer, and the reputable Tradeſman.

Q. But are there not many people of honeſty and humanity who wiſh for an alteration? Who deſire a different mode of repreſentation? To have the Slave-trade aboliſhed? And to place Tithes on a different footing?

A. There are. But it would become all of them to conſider, whether theſe ſubjects are not made uſe of craftily and plauſibly to enſnare their feelings. Whether, while thinking themſelves principals, they are not inſtruments in the hands of *thoſe* who aim at the ſubverſion of our government, laws, and religion. Who know they can accompliſh their end, only by ſowing amongſt us diſcord and mutual animoſities—by influencing the paſſions of ſome, and intereſts of others—thus gaining allies to their pernicious and deſtructive cauſe under the falſe pretences of Virtue, Equity, and Humanity.

Q. But ſurely *Grievances* ſhould be redreſſed?

A. We ſhould firſt be certain that the things complained of *are grievances*. Secondly, if they *are* ſo, as no Human State can be perfect, to enquire whether they are

not *tolerable*. And thirdly, whether, by the propoſed redreſs a door may not be *opened*, to the introduction of *greater evils*, and *grievauces truly intolerable*.

Q. What *greater evils* do you ſuſpect?

A. That *Republican, lawleſs Tyranny*, like that in France, would *uſurp* the place of our *mild* and *equitable* government; under which *all who have any property*, though acquired by honeſt labour, would be in *a more abject ſtate of Slavery* than the African negroes. And that *the Farmer*, inſtead of *diſputing about tithes*, would neither have *corn* nor *money* to diſpute about. For, according to the modern doctrines of equality and philoſophy, his eſtate would be parcelled out among others; and though he might have the ſatisfaction of ſeeing the *Clergy* ſuffer, *he* would be a moſt miſerable *fellow-ſufferer*; and bitterly lament when too late, the folly by which, under the *guidance of falſe friends*, he engaged in *ſchemes, the extent* of which he did not foreſee; but conſulting only his *preſent intereſt*, and *to ſave a few pounds*, find that he has *utterly and irrecoverably ruined himſelf, his Wife, and Children*.

Q. You mentioned *Philoſophy*; what do you underſtand by that term?

A. I cannot readily anſwer you.

Q. Why ſo?

A. Becauſe the grand Reformers of the world, and Perverters of plain and ſimple ſpeech, have lately changed it's meaning. For as they give the name of liberty to *licentiouſneſs*, and of equality to *plunder*, ſo by *philoſophy*, which uſed to ſignify *the love of wiſdom*, and implied likewiſe *the love of virtue*, they now mean *the love of vice and folly?*

Q. Can you give me an example?

A. I can; by referring you again to the ſtate of France, where the doctrines of *modern philoſophy* are now reduced to practice. This *practice* conſiſts in depreſſing the wiſe and virtuous, men of talents and liberal education, or baniſhing them from the kingdom. While the newly-enlightened Pupils of Philoſophy, have placed at their head, thoſe ſame Murderers, Ruffians, Banditti, and Fiſh-Women, whom I took notice of before, and whom, from their

their thorough acquaintance with Ignorance, Brutality, and every kind of Vice, they ſtile *Philoſophers* and *Reformers* of Mankind.

Q. Can this be really true? And ſhall we likewiſe be thus egregiouſly impoſed on?

A. I ſhall anſwer your firſt queſtion, as I have once already. It is as true, as that We are now living in a ſtate of *proſperity*, *ſecurity*, and *abundance*. We *might*, indeed, *be ſo impoſed on*, if words with us did not preſerve their natural meaning. If we did not know that *Philoſophy* is not the love of Vice and Folly, but the love of Wiſdom and Virtue. If we could not ſee through the *cant* of *Liberty* and *Equality*, which would enſlave our perſons, and rob us of our ſubſtance: And if we did not plainly perceive *from the example of France*, that *National Bankruptcy* would be the conſequence, *and all the horrors of Poverty, Diſtreſs, and Famine*.

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